

# HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

505 East Third Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90013  
(213) 626-4200 - FAX (213) 626-6850

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Los Angeles, CA  
Permit No. 24616



# The Way

Vol. 74 | No. 2  
February/March 2022

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## TEMPLE SCHEDULE

### Please note:

*In-person Sunday Services have been temporarily discontinued. We will update you as our plans evolve. Thank you for your patience.*

### MARCH

- 6 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 13 Daylight Savings Begins
- 13 10:00 am Sunday Service Discussion Group
- 20 10:00 am Spring Ohigan Service
- 20 1:00 pm Spring Seminar
- 27 9:00 am Coffee & Dharma informal discussion
- 27 10:00 am Sunday Service

### APRIL

- 3 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 10 10:00 am LABTF Hanamatsuri Service @ HHBT
- 17 10:00 am Family Service
- 24 9:00 am Coffee & Dharma informal discussion
- 24 10:00 am Sunday Service

SUNDAY, MARCH 20

## SPRING OHIGAN SERVICE

10:00 AM

## SPRING SEMINAR

1:00 PM

*The service will be streamed on our Facebook page and the seminar will take place on Zoom*

## LABTF HANAMATSURI

SUNDAY, APRIL 10  
10:00 AM

*The service will be streamed on our Facebook page*

If you would like to schedule a private memorial service or visit the ashes of your loved one at the temple, please call us to schedule an appointment at 213-626-4200.

FOR UPDATES, PLEASE  
SUBSCRIBE TO OUR EMAIL LIST  
BY VISITING OUR  
WEBSITE AT

[HHBT-LA.ORG](http://HHBT-LA.ORG)

## STREAM OUR SUNDAY SERVICES LIVE ON FACEBOOK

[FACEBOOK.COM/HHBT.LA](https://facebook.com/hhbt.la)

SUNDAYS | 10 AM



[facebook.com/hhbt.la](https://facebook.com/hhbt.la)



[@higashihonganjila](https://instagram.com/higashihonganjila)



# The Way



Volume 74 | Number 2 | February & March 2022

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## Why is There No Prayer or Meditation in Jōdo Shinshū?

Rev. Kensho Goto

In general, prayer is central to religion, and Buddhism in particular has the image that we can achieve enlightenment by deeply observing our inner self through meditation.

After Shinran discovered Amitabha Buddha's Original Vow (the vow of unconditional salvation), it became clear that faith was a gift from Buddha. It was not an appeal from the self, but rather the self was the recipient. That means to understand that we human beings, who are *bonbu* (ordinary people whose minds are clouded by ignorance) and unable to reach our goal through our own power, are bathed in Amida's light and receive his strength.

To say that "things are going well thanks to my prayers," or "I have grown mentally by meditation," does not mean that you are coming close to your final destination. This is not to disavow prayer and meditation, but rather that one should recognize sincerely one's own weakness, be sustained by the

Buddha together with all other weak beings, bask in his light, and discover the significance of one's own existence and the joy of living.

Many Japanese, when praying to the Shinto deities and the Buddhas, usually pray to receive something of value or to receive better treatment than others—"I pray that everything goes favorably for me," or "Please don't let that happen," or "I hope that things go as I wish." In terms of victory or defeat, we pray to win and to have the other lose. It is a way of thinking in which we desire that the other will suffer a loss so that we can profit. Is it really possible for us to live together within such human relationships?

It is also a delusion to believe that we can become someone special through meditation (a mystical experience). The agent of both actions, prayer and meditation, is "I."

Jōdo Shinshū advocates just recitation of the nenbutsu: "Only say the nenbutsu and be saved by Amida Buddha." That means to recite the nenbutsu with faith, accepting it as a practice that has been given to us by Amida. In short, just when we grasp clearly that the Buddha is the agent who strives for us and for our sakes, we will be able to see and notice many things. Because of this, there are no prayers or meditation in Jōdo Shinshū.



## Reflections on the Incident on February 25, 2021

Just over a year ago on the evening of February 25, 2021 the temple was unexpectedly vandalized. The wooden lantern stands in front of the pillars at the entrance were burned to the ground, the brass lanterns on both sides at the base of the stairs were toppled, and one of the large windows at the entrance was shattered with a rock.

Since this happened in the midst of many crimes against Asian Americans, the media immediately referred to it as a hate crime. The culprit was never identified and so the intent remained unknown. We were shocked and saddened that someone would vandalize a place of worship. However, we received so much support and encouragement. This made us realize that Higashi Honganji is loved and respected by so many people both in and beyond our local community.

It was also an opportunity to share our teachings of living in the midst of the impermanence of life, and also understanding how we are all interconnected. It isn't easy to follow the lessons we receive from our teachings. But even on a simple basis, if we can try to share our smile with everyone, perhaps such small efforts may encourage others to do the same.

With the generous contributions we received, we have made improvements to our security protocols - new fencing, indoor and outdoor alarm systems, and also due to the ongoing pandemic, we are keeping our gates closed. We look forward to regaining our normal schedules and activities and we hope to see all of you again soon.

### Our deepest condolences

to the family and relatives of ...

Mrs. Kaneko Oshima Bishop (91)

January 8, 2022

Mrs. Satsuko Hattori (105)

January 9, 2022

Mr. Osamu Maeda (88)

February 3, 2022

Namu Amida Butsu

visit our website at  
[hhbt-la.org](http://hhbt-la.org)



# Betsuin News



## Eitaikyo Service & Annual General Meeting

Our 2022 Eitaikyo Service was held virtually, remembering all of our temple members who have passed away. At our Eitaikyo Service, Rinban Noriaki Ito gave a Dharma Talk in English and Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi spoke in Japanese. This year, we were unable to hold the Annual New Year Luncheon again, but we still held the 117<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting by Zoom. We opened the General Meeting with greetings from our Board President, Mr. Wayne Itoga and Rinban Noriaki Ito. Wayne Itoga opened the general meeting. A betsuin report, temple financial report, and the election of 2022 Board of Directors were presented by Rinban Noriaki Ito, Gary Kanemoto, and David Ikeda, respectively. Presentations were made by Wayne Itoga to temple volunteers to honor their hard work over the course of the past year. After the presentations, we ended the General Meeting with a slideshow of our memories of this past year. We want to send a special thank you to Shin Ito for acting as Master of Ceremonies during the meeting. We look forward to gathering next year!

## Shusho-e New Year Service

The first morning of 2021, the Shusho-e New Year's Day Service was held virtually. The ministers each shared special New Year messages to give the year a positive start. We were unable to toast together in person again this year, but we wish everyone a happy and healthy 2022!

## 2021 Year-End Events

We ended 2021 with a smaller scale version of our annual Temple Clean Up. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our Mochitsuki again this year. Our annual Joya-e Service was held virtually but we missed enjoying Toshikoshi Soba together and taking turns tolling the bell before midnight. The ministers gave reflective messages about the past year and shared their challenges and accomplishments with hopes to see each other more in 2022.

## Spring Ohigan & Spring Seminar

This year's Spring Ohigan Service will be held virtually on Sunday, March 20th at 10:00am. The Spring Seminar will be held the same day as our Ohigan Service at 1:00 pm via Zoom. We welcome you to invite your friends and family to join us for both of these important events!

## Hanamatsuri 2022

Every year, we celebrate Sakyamuni Buddha's birthday on a Sunday near April 8<sup>th</sup> which is the day he was born over 2,500 years ago in India.

This year, our Higashi Honganji is hosting the Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation observance and so we will combine the LABTF's Hanamatsuri celebration together with our Family Service on Sunday, April 10 from 10:00 am. As of now, we are hoping that we can have an in-person gathering. But we will not know until perhaps sometime in March.

For this wonderful annual gathering, we will have Rev. Dr. Mark Unno serve as our guest speaker. He will speak on this year's theme, "Let Us Discover the Meaning of our Birth and Find Joy in Living." Rev. Dr. Unno was the Keynote Lecturer at our World Dobo Gathering in 2016. He is currently a professor of Religious Studies at the University of Oregon. He will be speaking in both English and Japanese.

Please join us to celebrate the birth of Sakyamuni Buddha together with members not only of our temple but of all of the temples in the Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation. We will let all of you know by mid-March whether it will be an in-person, hybrid, or streaming only gathering.

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING  
TO HIGASHI HONGANJI  
BUDDHIST TEMPLE AT  
[HHBT-LA.ORG](http://HHBT-LA.ORG)

visit our website at  
[hhbt-la.org](http://hhbt-la.org)



[facebook.com/hhbt.la](https://www.facebook.com/hhbt.la)



[@higashihonganjila](https://www.instagram.com/higashihonganjila)

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

Submissions for *The Way* are due the 10th of each month for the following month's issue. Articles and announcements for our June Issue are due May 10th. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

HIGASHI HONGANJI  
**GOLF**  
TOURNAMENT

**HAS BEEN POSTPONED!**  
**STAY TUNED**  
**FOR UPDATES!**